

GOD & SOUL



*Dvaa suparnaa sayujaa sakhaayaa samaanam vriksham pari shasvajaate |
Tayoranyah pippalam svaadvattyanashnannanyo abhi chakrasheeti | |*

(RigVeda 1.164.20)

This hymn is an allegory, describing the relationship between *Eeshvar* (God) and *jeeva* (soul) as two birds with beautiful wings; two completely separate entities, but also united as eternal friends. Both are on the same tree.

Eeshvar is the Supreme Being (*sat*), Super-consciousness (*chitta*), and All-blissfull (*anand*).

The soul is a consciousness (*chitta*) being (*sat*), uses the physical body and the invisible subtle body (mind, prana/breath, senses), and seeks bliss (*aanand*).

Q: Why the tree?

A: Like any tree, the physical body can fall at any time. Hence, the need for us to be effective (do the right things) as well as be efficient (do things right) in our efforts on the path of *Dharma* (righteous living), *Artha* (righteous earnings), *Kaama* (righteous pleasures) and *Moksha* (salvation, liberation from the cycle of birth and death). Like the roots, God is not visible to the naked eye. The tree connotes *samsara*: the field where the soul perform actions (*karma*) and face the results of the actions (*karmaphala*) for the soul.

Q: What do the birds do?

A: One bird (the soul) avidly enjoys the fruits of the tree with various tastes, sweet, sour and bitter; lots of pleasant, painful and mixed experiences, in day-to-day life. The other bird (Eeshvar, God) is a radiant, sharp observer. He dwells in all, but does not indulge in any experience.

Q: Why does He only sit and watch the soul in action?

A: Omnipotent, He is in a superior position. Without Him, the soul cannot do anything. He has conferred corporeal existence to the soul, without which it would not have the capacity to perform various actions and enjoy the results. Omnipresent (present everywhere and at

all times), He there is no way of our doing anything without his knowing. All-just, He awards the results of the soul's actions in due time.

Q: Why this metaphor?

A: The two birds on one and the same tree illustrates the presence within the physical body of both the individual soul (conscious being) and the Super soul (Eeshvar or Super-Conscious Being). The two birds are two separate entities, distinct from the tree; likewise, the Supreme soul and the individual soul are two different entities, distinct from the physical body.

God is Eternal, Omniscient and All-blissful, devoid of any pain, sorrow or suffering. Omnipotent, He needs no external gratification. All-knowledge, He is always enlightened. He has a superior existence, and thus called the Supreme Soul (*Parmaatmaa*).

The individual soul (*jeeva*) is at times in illusion and enlightened. He indulge in actions resulting in short term pleasures, consuming bitter fruits and thinking them to be sweet. Clouded by ignorance, he believes the body and the soul to be one ...more-than-often the truth slaps him at the end of his lifetime.

Q: Why do we digress from our goals?

A: This universe is similar to a class: souls as the students, and God and His creation as the teacher. During lesson time students are free to learn, stay idle or play truant. During the examinations they are free to write whatever they deem fit, but the results are performance-based and awarded by the teacher. In Samsara, souls are free to perform actions, but the results are awarded by the impartial witness and judge (God).

Q: What links the Soul to the Supreme Soul?

A: Unlike the worldly friend who leaves us when we ignore him, the Supreme Soul (God) is the magnanimous, compassionate, and ever-caring friend (*Dayalu*) who always dwells within us. He has endowed us with the capacity to recognise His presence within us. He is the divine guide (inner voice) to the righteous path (*Shreya maarga*), ultimately leading us to long lasting bliss (moksha). The choice to be a worthy friend or not is ours.

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